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ABSTRACT

A study examined the relationship between Japanese adolescents' media exposure, images of the United States, and their attitudes towards the United States and its people by surveying Japanese junior high school students. By using cultivation theory, the study hypothesized that an image of a dangerous America would be partly attributed to Japanese mass media that contain a lot of violent topics about the United States. Results indicated no association between the respondents' violent images of the United States and the amount of their media exposure. Findings were contradictory, however. Violent images of the United States were related with respondents' negative attitudes towards the United States as a nation, not with their attitudes towards individual Americans. On the other hand, exposure to American television programs and movies was positively correlated to respondents' positive attitudes towards America and Americans. Contains 29 references and 5 tables of data. (Author/RS)

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Running head: Media, Images, and Attitudes

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Relationships Between Media Exposure, Violent Images, and Attitude Towards The U.S. Contradictions in Japanese Adolescents' Images and Attitudes

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Relationships Between Media Exposure, Violent Images, and Attitude Towards The U.S.
Contradictions in Japanese Adolescents' Images and Attitudes.

ABSTRACT

The present study examines the relationship between Japanese adolescents' media exposure, images of the United States, and their attitudes towards the U.S. and its people by survey of Japanese junior high school students. By using cultivation theory, the present study hypothesized that an image of a dangerous America would be partly attributed Japanese mass media that contain a lot of violent topics about the U.S. This study did not find any association between the respondents' violent images of the U.S. and the amount of their media exposure. This study found contradictory results, however. Violent images of the U.S. are related with respondents' negative attitudes towards the U.S. as a nation, not with their attitudes towards individual Americans. On the other hand, exposure to American television programs and movies is positively correlated to respondents' positive attitudes towards America and Americans.

Relationships Between Media Exposure, Violent Images, and Attitude Towards The U.S. Contradictions in Japanese Adolescents' Images and Attitudes.

Images of America and the American people in the minds of most Japanese seem violent even though Japan and the U.S. are partners in bilateral trade and regional security. A prevalent Japanese image of the United States is that every American is armed with a gun and people shoot them everywhere, anytime; to Japanese, America is a very dangerous place.

According to a poll of Japanese (Mainichi Shinbun, 1994), three out of the top five respondent images of the U.S. were negative: Japanese associated the U.S. with "guns and murder "(ranked first, 76 percent), "drugs" (ranked third, 35 percent), and "discrimination" (ranked forth, 32 percent). Another poll revealed similar images (Asahi Shinbun, 1991); although 33 percent of respondents answered that their impression about America and its citizens was that "America is free and generous," 19 percent said that America is a country of drugs and crime; 13 percent answered that America intervenes in other countries' matters militarily; and 11 percent said that America looks down on Japan. How have Japanese come to have such bad images of America and American society?

The present study examined a plausible cause of this negative perception of the United States by conceptualizing Japanese mass media (total television watching, American television program, and American movie videos) as "cultivators" of this negative image in Japanese people's minds. Survey questionnaires were administered on 220 junior high school students to tap Japanese adolescents' perception of the U.S. and attitudes towards the U.S. and its citizens.

Researchers have yet to focus on international image cultivation by using rental video movies as an independent. Most international cultivation studies measured U.S. television

program influence on foreign viewers to estimate American "cultural imperialism" (Pingree & Hawkins, 1981; Weimann, 1984; Kang & Morgan, 1988; Tan & Suarchavarat, 1988). In Japan, American videos dominate the Japanese rental video market, though, relatively little U.S. origin television content is broadcast in Japan.

Portrayals of America and Americans in the media are expected to have a strong effect on viewers' attitudes and perception about what the U.S. is like. For most of Japanese have never been to the country, their perception and attitudes towards the U.S. will be formed at least slightly by viewing the media's depiction of the U.S. "The influence will be greatest when dependence on the medium is high, and when direct experience with the response to be learned is limited" (Tan, Li, & Simpson, 1986). Determining what causes international cultivation could lead to other studies designed to find why such effect-causing content prevails in the media; as well as studies designed to enhance better relations between Japan and the U.S. Therefore, this study is important not only in terms of mass communication theory but also in terms of international relations between these countries.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Cultivation analysis was introduced by Gerbner and his colleagues more than two decades ago (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). According to Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1994), cultivation refers to the relationship between exposure to television messages and subsequent audience beliefs and behavior. Gerbner and his colleagues hypothesized that the more people watch television as a whole, the more they perceive social reality in the ways that television describes it.

Many cultivation studies have been conducted focusing on the relationship between television violence and perception about violence and crime, though the cultivation theory has been tested in various aspects of social life such as aging (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1980), soap opera viewing (Perse, 1986), perception of attorneys (Pfau, Mullen, Deidrich, & Garrow, 1995), erosion of local cultures (Morgan, 1986), and political attitudes (Morgan & Shanahan, 1991).

The theory has been used for international cultivation studies including formation of images of America and Americans (Pingree & Hawkins,1981; Weiman, 1984; Tan, Li, & Simpson, 1986; Tan, Tan, & Tan,1987; Tan & Suarchavarat,1988). Overall, these intercultural cultivation studies found "the frequency of viewing American television by foreign audiences is related to characterizations of Americans closely corresponding to the television portrayals" (Tan & Suarchavarat, 1988).

Pingree and Hawkins (1981) conducted cultivation analysis of U.S. programs on Australian television using 1.085 elementary and middle school students. They found the effects of American television programs on conceptions of social reality among the Australian children. However, exposure to American programs is more correlated with children's briefs about

Australia than their briefs about the U.S.; children who watched more American programs were more likely to believe Australia as dangerous and mean, not the U.S.

Weiman (1984) studied youngsters' perception of the American reality among high school and college students in Israel where more than 60 percent of broadcasting time is allocated to imported programs, most of which are American. The total sample of 461 was collected from 6 secondary schools and 1 college. Weiman compared the estimates given by respondents with the percentage of actual reality in the U.S. such as income, ownership of electrical appliances and cars, the number of rooms per unit and the like. It was found that heavy television viewers demonstrated "a strong and consistent tendency to overestimate, thus painting a rosier picture of reality" of the U.S., in terms of wealth and standard of living.

On the other hand, Tan, Li, and Simpson (1986) reported that the frequency of viewing some American programs aired in Taiwan and Mexico was correlated with negative images of Americans. They conducted a survey and collected 788 questionnaires completed by students, teachers, bank workers, and the like in northern, central, and southern Taiwan. In Mexico, 150 questionnaires were answered by college students in Mexico City. The pattern of results is consistent in both countries' sample. In the Taiwanese sample, the amount of viewing American programs was positively correlated to characterization of Americans as materialistic, and negatively correlated with characterization of Americans as honest and faithful. Similarly, in the Mexican sample, there is a relationship between the viewing of American programs and the characterizations of Americans as less honest, aggressive, and cruel.

In Philippines where 60 percent of all television programs were imported from the U.S., Tan, Tan, and Tan (1987) conducted questionnaires to 226 seniors in three high schools. Tan et al. (1987) found that heavy viewing of American programs led to an emphasis on non-traditional

values of high school students. Heavy viewers of American programs were more likely than light viewers to regard pleasure as an important value, and disregard salvation and wisdom. In term of attitudes towards the U.S., the findings suggested that heavy viewers of American programs were more likely than light viewers to intend to visit the U.S.

Tan and Suarchavarat (1988) found that American television for 279 Thai college students was a major source of social stereotypes about Americans. Respondents were asked to rate adjectives on a five-point scale according to how well the adjective described Americans. The picture of Americans held by Thai students were mixed and included both positive (artistic, athletic, courteous, neat, sensitive, and the like) and negative traits (arrogant, aggressive, pleasure-loving, and stubborn). The study also reported that the frequency of viewing American television programs was positively related to the self-reported probability of respondents' visiting the U.S. in the future.

As suggested by the literature reviewed, there are some discrepancies in these studies' results. The findings of international cultivation studies may not be applicable to Japan. The effects of U.S. television programs may vary in different countries and the impact of U.S. programs should not be consistent across different cultures (Kang & Morgan, 1988). However, it is rational to expect that some relationships between media exposure and Japanese people's perceptions and attitudes towards America and Americans.

Japanese Television

American television programs dominate the ratings and broadcasting time in many countries (Pingree & Hawkins, 1981). However, they are not very popular in Japan. According to Kawatake and Hara's study (1994), foreign television programs occupied only 5.2 percent of all Japanese broadcasting time in 1993. More than 70 percent of the foreign programs were U.S.

made (72.8 percent), though, ratings for the most of U.S. programs were low in Japan.

Japanese Rental Video

In Japan, the sale of foreign movie videos was more than three times the sale of domestic movie videos in 1995 (Asahi Nenkan1997, 1997). And foreign movies virtually mean American movies. American video movies monopolized the Japanese rental video market; American action, romance, suspense, comedy, adventure/science fiction, and drama occupied first to sixth places of the most popular rental video genres (Joho Media Hakusho, 1995). Crime and action adventure movies that contain a lot of violence are frequent rentals. In 1995, nine out of the ten most popular rental video movies were American action, crime, and adventure movies such as "Speed," "True Lies," "Specialist," "Outbreak," "X-file," "Mask," "Beverly Hills Cop 3," "Clear and Present Danger," and "Star Gate" (Joho Media Hakusho, 1996).

Hypotheses

This study will examine intercultural cultivation analysis based on American video movies rented in Japan. The hypothesis of this study is:

> H1: Japanese who are heavy watchers of American movie videos will be more likely to cultivate a social reality about the United States as portrayed in American movies; e.g., that America is a dangerous and hostile place for Japanese.

In addition to these hypotheses, a third hypothesis is presented. I assume that a negative perception of a given country has a crucial impact in intercultural communication settings, since initiation of communication is expected to be influenced and controlled by how people preconceive their counterpart. I assume that one of the most important factors in interpersonal

intercultural communication, at least in its initial stages, is perception of one's counterpart. Negative pre-perceptions and stereotypes about a foreign country and its citizens could lead to unwillingness and avoidance in international communication in real life. Put another way, positive pre-perception could be related to willingness to communicate with people from different cultures. The conceptualization of "willingness to communicate" is essentially the same as "unwillingness" but is worded in the positive rather than negative direction (McCroskey, 1992). It is applicable to examining unwillingness (or willingness) to communicate on exposure of the mass media (Burgoon, 1976). Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

> H2: Japanese people's unwillingness/avoidance of intercultural communication with Americans increases if they have "cultivated" negative images or stereotypes about the U.S.

In addition, it would be rational to expect that media exposure has a direct impact on attitudes such as intercultural communication and desire to travel to the U.S. The research question of the study is:

> R1: Is there any association between media exposure and respondents' attitudes towards the U.S. and its citizens?

Method

Subjects

This study used adolescent children from three public junior high schools located in a middle-sized city from western Japan. The city employs three foreign English teachers (American, Canadian, and English) for all of the city's 11 junior high schools. Every student has a chance to be taught by one of the native English teachers, however, the frequency is very small. Teachers at the schools distributed a questionnaire survey to students in February and March 1998 for the present investigator. The survey data was originally planned to come from six different schools representing the city, and all subjects were supposed to be 8th graders. However, due to a technical problem, 55 8th graders (14 years old) were sampled from two schools, and 165 9th graders (15 years old) were sampled from a third school. The total number of returned questionnaires was 220: 51.8 percent female (n = 114) and 48.2 percent male (n = 106).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to retrieve respondents' images of the U.S. ("American is a dangerous nation," "Americans are violent," and "The U.S. is inflicted with crime"), estimation of U.S. social reality ("You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S.," "Estimate how many more murders per ten thousand people occur in the U.S. than in Japan," "The punishment for violence in the U.S. is lighter than that of Japan"), attitudes towards the U.S. ("Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone," "Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.," "Do you like the U.S"), and extent of interpersonal communication with Americans ("Do you want to have an American friend?," "If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?" and "Would you speak if an

American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?"). Each item was answered on 5-point Likert scales: strongly agree (definitely yes) to strongly disagree (definitely no) ranging from 5 to 1 (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not either, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. For the item of estimation of murder rate, 5 = 20 times or more, 4 = 10 – 19 times, 3 = 5 – 9 times, 2 = 2 – 4 times, 1 = same as Japan). These continuous data were used for the correlation analysis. The response data were also collapsed into three categories: agree (5 and 4 in Likert scale), not either (3), and disagree (2 and 1). The three categories were used for cross-tabular analysis.

Violent Image

Forty six percent of respondents agreed and 11 percent strongly agreed that "America is a dangerous nation;" 17 percent disagreed and 4 percent strongly disagreed. Forty one percent agreed and 13 percent strongly agreed that "America is a crime-ridden country;" 14 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed. However, 21 percent agreed and 5 percent strongly agreed to the item "In general, Americans are violent;" more respondents disagreed (32 %) and strongly disagreed (4 %). The respondents seem to regard America as more violent than they do individual Americans. Correlation coefficients between these three items are as follows (all these correlations are significant at the .01 level): "America is a dangerous nation" and "America is a crime-ridden country" is .19; "America is a dangerous nation" and "In general, Americans are violent" is .18; "America is a crime-ridden country" and "In general, Americans are violent" is .30. The reliability coefficient of internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) for these three items was .46. These three items were added into one variable, a Violence Index, which represents the respondents' violent image about America and Americans as a whole. The Violence Index (M = 9.8, SD = 2.1) ranges from 3 (least violent image) to 15 (most violent image), and was used for regression analysis between the index and media exposure, such as television, television news

and rental video viewing.

Estimation

In addition to these violent image items, respondents were asked to answer their estimation/opinion of the social reality about the United States. Twenty five percent of the respondents agreed and 8 percent strongly agreed; 33 percent disagreed and 15 percent strongly disagreed to the item "You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S." Thirty nine percent thought and 16 percent strongly thought that the punishment for violence in the U.S. is lighter than that of Japan; 19 percent thought oppositely and 4 percent strongly thought oppositely. In terms of the estimation of murder rate in the U.S. compared to that of Japan, only 6 percent answered "same as Japan," 39 percent answered the murder rate was 2 – 4 times that of Japan, 31 percent responded 5 – 9 times, 14 percent responded 10 – 19 times, and 11 percent estimated 20 or more times.

Cross-Cultural Communication

Unwillingness/avoidance of international communication was measured by a modified scale of Burgoon's model (1976) because the scale contains items that represent attitudes toward specific communication situations. Contrary to the images of the U.S. that were predominately negative, most of the respondents were willing to communicate with Americans. Fifty four percent wanted and 21 percent strongly wanted to have an American friend; only 4 % did not and 2 percent strongly did not. Forty six percent wanted and 43 percent strongly wanted to get along with an American regardless of their English ability; only 1 percent did not and 1 percent strongly did not. Fifty three percent would like to and 40 percent strongly would like to speak to an American who speaks Japanese well; 1 % strongly would not like to. Since most of the respondents were willing to communicate with Americans, "unwillingness/avoidance" should be

renamed to "communication willingness."

Correlation coefficients between these three items are as follows (all these correlations are significant at the .01 level): "Do you want to have an American friend?" and "If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?" is .71; "Do you want to have an American friend?" and "Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?" is .34; "If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?" and "Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?" is .42. As was done to construct the violent image index, these three items were combined to create one variable, a Communication Index (M = 12.5, SD = 1.9), which represents over all cross cultural communication willingness with Americans. The Index was used for regression analysis as well. The reliability of these three items is .75. The range of the Communication Index is 3 (most unwilling) to 15 (most willing).

Attitude/Opinion

Unlike the cross cultural communication items that were heavily skewed to the positive side (willingness to communicate with Americans), respondents' attitudes toward the U.S. were relatively balanced. Thirty eight percent of them answered yes and 9 percent answered definitely yes to the item "Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone some day?"; 24 percent said no and 15 percent said definitely no. Forty three percent answered yes and 13 percent definitely yes to the question "Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.?"; 12 percent answered no and 12 percent said definitely no. However, in terms of liking the U.S., most respondents liked the nation; 60 percent liked the U.S. and 15 percent strongly liked; only 2 percent did not like and 1 percent did not strongly like the country.

Correlation coefficients between these three items are as follows (all these correlations are significant at the .01 level): "Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone" and "Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S." is .32; "Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone" and "Do you like the U.S" is .33; "Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S." "Do you like the U.S" is .44. Again, these three items were combined to create one variable, an Attitude Index (M = 10.2, SD = 2.4), which stands for attitude/opinion towards the U.S. The reliability of these three items is .59. The range of the Attitude Index is 3 (most unwilling) to 15 (most willing).

Personal Experience

Since personal encounters and companionship may have an overriding effect on mass mediated cultivation, subjects were questioned about their personal experiences, interpersonal communication, and information sources about the U.S. Only one student had been to the U.S. and no one had stayed for one month or more. Four students (1.8 percent) corresponded with American pen pals. Ten percent of them have American friends (n = 22). Seven percent had someone in their family who had American friends (n = 16). These variables are not significant so they were not used as control variables in the analysis. Thirty-two percent (n = 71) had heard stories about travel to the United States or American life from a family member or an acquaintance (Story: coded 1 for yes, 0 for no). Forty-two percent (n = 92) had spoken with an American(s) other than American English teachers (Chatting: coded 1 for yes, 0 for no).[1] These two variables were used as control variables for regression analysis.

Media Exposure:

Respondents were asked to give estimates of their amount/frequency of viewing on a 6-point scale for each of these categories: U.S. television programs (never =16 percent; about a

[1] The percentage of respondents who had spoken with an American(s) other than American English teachers is high. However, I think that the most had done so very briefly at an

couple of times a year = 16 percent; about a couple of times a half year = 10 percent; about a couple of times a month = 23 percent; about a couple of times a week = 29 percent; almost everyday = 6 percent), television as a whole (less than 30 minutes = 2 percent; 30 minutes – 1 hour = 5 percent; 1 – 2 hours = 22 percent; 2 – 3 hours = 30 percent; 3 – 4 hours = 24 percent; more than 4 hours = 16 percent), and American rental videos (Never = 34 percent; about a couple of times a year = 27 percent; about a couple of times a half year = 20 percent; about a couple of times a month = 16 percent; once a week = 2 percent; 2 times or more a week = 3 percent). The questionnaire included both the amount of viewing on average for a given period and the amount of viewing the day (or week) previous to the questionnaire.[2]

Determining what constitutes light, medium, and heavy viewing is made on a sample by sample basis. Respondents were divided into light, medium, and heavy watchers by using as close to an approximate normal distribution split as possible. What is important is that there are differences in these three viewing levels, not the specific amount of viewing (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). The definitions of light, medium, and heavy watchers for each media exposure are as follows: television news (light = less than 15 minutes, medium = 15 minutes – 1 hour, and heavy = more than 1 hour); American television programs (light = about a couple of times a year or less, medium = about a couple of times a half year to a month, heavy = about a couple of times a week or more); American rental videos (light = never, medium = about a couple of times a year or half year, heavy = about a couple of times a month or more); television

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international festival or some other similar events.

[2] Ninth grade subjects were about to take entrance exams to high schools they applied when the questionnaire was administered. The exams for high schools are critical and one of the toughest challenges in life for every Japanese. They simply cannot afford to spend time on the media at that time because they have to desperately prepare for the exams. Actually, their amount of viewing the media on yesterday (or last week) are far less than that of on average and were not considered relevant. Therefore, viewing on average day (or week, month) was used as the amount of media viewing.

as a whole (light = less than 1 hour, medium = 1 – 4 hours, heavy = more than 4 hours).

Results

Statistical Analysis

Cross-tabular analysis was conducted for questions about perceptions of the U.S. and attitudes towards Americans. This analysis was employed by Gerbner et al.'s (1978, 1979, & 1980) cultivation project and other similar studies. Contingency tables compare responses of light, medium, and heavy viewers, which are defined in the pervious chapter, of television news, U.S. television programs, U.S. video, television overall, and U.S. media. The difference between heavy and light viewers is defined as the Cultivation Differential (CD). Gamma was used to measure the strength and direction of the cross-tabular association between media exposure and respondents' perception and attitudes. The sign of gamma indicates whether overall association is positive or negative, and the magnitude of gamma means the strength of the association. If subjects are overall higher on one variable as well as higher on the other variable, then the association is positive. On the other hand, if higher on one variable and lower on the other variable, the association is negative (see, Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Cross-tabular analysis may lose some information of the data because the data are collapsed. Thus, the correlation coefficients between media exposure, perception, and attitudes were also calculated to double-check the relationship by using continuous data: 6-point scale for media exposure and 5-point Likert scale for perception and attitudes.

Multiple regression was used to measure the relative correlations between the amount or frequency of media exposure and cultivation by using the Violence, Attitude, and Communication Indexes to assess the overall contribution of demographic and experience factors to cultivation. Three control variables were dummy coded: Sex (Gender: male = 1, female = 0); experience of chatting with an American (Chatting: yes = 1, no = 0); and experience of hearing

about the U.S. travel and life from someone (Story: yes = 1, no = 0). These control variables were entered first (Step 1). In order to measure the relative correlation, media exposure variables were then entered second (Step 2).

U.S. Television Programs

Overall, U.S. television viewing was positively associated with positive attitudes towards America and Americans (Table 1). Heavy U.S. television watchers wanted to travel to the U.S. (gamma = .24, $p < .05$; $r = .16$, $p < .05$) and experience a "home stay" (gamma = .22, $p < .05$; $r = .17$, $p < .01$) more than light watchers did. In addition, heavy watchers wanted to get along with Americans more than light watchers did (gamma = .38, $p < .05$; $r = .22$, $p < .01$). All in all, heavy viewers had more positive attitudes towards America (Attitude Index: $r = .20$, $p < .01$) and more desire to engage in cross cultural communication with Americans (Communication Index: $r = .22$, $p < .01$).

[Table 1 about here]

The data did not indicate any association between U.S. television viewing and the respondents' violent images of the U.S. All gammas and correlation coefficients pertaining to violent images were insignificant.

American Movie Videos

Table 2 shows that heavy U.S. movie video viewers tend to believe in the power of American lawyers (gamma = .27, $p < .01$; $r = 17$, $p < .05$). Specifically, 57 percent of heavy watchers believed that "You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S." Only 21 % of light video watchers believed that to be true. This finding may be attributed to the impact of lawyers' roles played by actors/actresses in American movies. In terms of attitudes towards the U.S., heavy video watchers appeared to be more positive than light watchers. For

example, heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to want to travel to the U.S. alone (gamma = .24, $p < .05$; $r = 16$, $p < .05$) and to get along with an American regardless of English ability (gamma = .38, $p < .05$; $r = .22$, $p < .01$).

[Table 2 about here]

Total Television

As shown in Table 3, there is no significant association between total television watching and any dependent variables.

[Table 3 about here]

Violent Images and Attitudes

The relationship between the respondents' violent images and attitudes was examined (Table 4). Whereas the respondents' attitudes towards the U.S. are negatively related to their violent images of the U.S., there is no association between the respondents' violent images and their attitudes towards communication with individual Americans. Put another way, those who have negative images of the U.S. are less likely to want to travel to the U.S., stay in a U.S. "home stay," and to like the U.S. On the other hand, respondents wanted to communicate with Americans regardless of whether their perceptions of the U.S are positive or negative. The respondents' communication attitudes are correlated only to the viewing of American television programs and video movies. This finding suggests that images of the U.S. have an impact only on respondents' attitudes towards the nation, not towards communicating with individual Americans. Hypothesis 2 was partly supported.

[Table 4 about here]

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study originally planned to use various personal experiences as dummy variables. Because most of the control variables did not have substantial representation among respondents, only three variables were used for dummy coding: gender (coded 1 for male, 0 for female), the experience of chatting with an American (chatting: coded 1 for yes, 0 for no), and hearing a story about the U.S. from a family member or acquaintance (story: coded 1 for yes, 0 for no). Generally, it seems that the respondents' gender and personal experiences do have an impact on attitudes towards the U.S.

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression test whose dependent variables are Violence, Attitude, and Communication Indexes. For the Violence Index, none of the predictor variables were significant. As revealed in the first analysis of Cultivation Differentials and correlation, no independent variables explain the variance of the respondents' violent images of the U.S.

[Table 5 about here]

On the other hand, demographic and experience variables accounted for 10 percent of the Communication Index on the first step. At this step, gender (being females) and the experience of chatting with Americans were significant predictors. The final equation accounted for 14 percent of the variance in the Communication Index ($R = .38$). Only American television viewing ($ß = .18$, $p < .01$) was a significant positive predictor among the media exposure variables. Gender ($ß = -.20$, $p < .01$) and chatting ($ß = .14$, $p < .05$) remained significant.

For the Attitude Index, gender and experience variables were also entered on the first step. These variables explained 6.3 percent ($p < .01$) of the variance in the Attitude Index. Chatting was the only significant positive predictor and story was marginally significant at this

stage. The final equation accounted for 11.5 percent of the variance in the Attitude Index (R = .33). Only chatting remained significant (ß = .14, $p < .05$) among the control variables. Once again only American television viewing was a significant predictor (ß = .17, $p < .05$) in the media exposure variables.

Conclusion

This study provides partial support for the hypotheses linking media exposure and respondents' estimation about American social realities as well as their attitudes towards Americans. The findings, however, generally failed to support the hypothesized association between media viewing and violent images of the U.S. Why is it that the correlation between media viewing and violent images was not generally found? It is beyond dispute that most of the respondents, and Japanese as general, conceive of the U.S. as violent. Does exposure to the media have no effect on creating the image of the U.S.? Most popular movies shown in Japan are produced in the U.S.

One possible answer is that information about the U.S., especially about violence, exists to the point of saturation in Japan. According to the data of this survey, television is ranked first as the greatest information source about American matters by respondents (71 percent). American movie is ranked second (11%). They may, however, still have many other channels through which they obtain information. The effect of media exposure might be diluted by many information channels so that it is difficult to discern effects.

Another persuasive explanation can be made using the "drench hypothesis" (Greenberg, 1988). This hypothesis seems relevant to account for the non significant difference found here between heavy and light viewers in terms of their violent images of the U.S. The drench hypothesis posits that "Some characters in some series, or miniseries, or single programs may be so forceful as to account for a significant portion of the role images we maintain. . . not all portrayals have the same impact" (Greenberg, 1988). The drench effect is applicable to the creation of images of a foreign country. A particular news piece about a violent aspect of the U.S. could dominate an audience's image of the country regardless of the amount of individual

news exposure. Even a single news story could "supercede or even overwhelm" people's U.S. pre-perception that had been derived from many other news stories. Viewing one single striking television program could form and change perception more than viewing a whole bunch of unimpressive programs.

The results generally attest to the relationship between the consumption of the American media and the respondents' positive attitudes towards America. American media exposure seems to have a stronger effect on people's positive attitudes rather than their perceptions. The causality of the relationship can not be stated, of course. It is entirely possible that people who have positive attitudes towards the U.S. may then watch more American television programs and videos than those whose attitudes are negative towards the U.S. The alternative explanation of selective exposure theory may account for the relationship: Prior disposition (orientation, attitude) towards the U.S. is followed by their choice of American television programs and videos. Thus, these two factors, inherent positive attitudes towards the U.S. and American media exposure, may influence each other and interact to raise positive attitudes towards the U.S.

Most of the respondents had negative images about the U.S. while disagreeing that "Generally, Americans are violent." Their violent images of the U.S. are correlated only with their negative attitudes towards the U.S. as a nation, not with their attitudes towards individual Americans. It is rational that those who have negative images about the U.S. do not like the nation and avoid traveling there. However, these negative images have nothing to do with their attitudes about communicating with Americans. This finding seems to be contradictory because people are part of a nation and a nation consists of people; violence is committed by people, not by the nation itself. What makes the difference between the nation and its people? In the Japanese television world, there are substantial numbers of popular American entertainers who

speak Japanese fluently, from comedians to commentators. Some American sports stars, movie stars, "super models" and the like are also stars in Japan. They might influence the images of American people in the mind of Japanese. To these viewers, Americans are cool, friendly, and funny.

There are limitations in the present study. First, neither American television programs aired in Japan nor American video movies were content-analyzed. Morgan (1990) claims "(T)he absence of message data should not prevent cultivation researchers from taking advantage of special data collection opportunities." Without a systematic content analysis of the media message, however, it might not be appropriate to assert the media's impact on perception and attitude.

Since the respondents were all middle school students, one should be very careful to generalize results. This study's results were all obtained through survey questionnaire. Most of the questionnaire items, measure of images, estimation, attitude, and media exposure, are fixed multiple choices. The results may have been different if they had been obtained by a more in-depth method such as focus groups.

Lastly, this study presented the complex relationship between perception and attitude. Japanese people's attitudes towards the U.S. and its people may be somewhat ambivalent: love and hate. In a future study, the complex mechanism of ambivalent perception and attitude should be elucidated.

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Table 1: U.S. Television Program Watching and Perceptions about & Communication Attitude toward Americans

	Questionnaire Items	Light % (n)	Medium % (n)	Heavy % (n)	CD	Gamma	r
VIOLENCE IMAGE	America is a dangerous nation.	55 (39)	65 (46)	53 (41)	-2	.01	.06
	Americans are violent.	32 (23)	11 (8)	33 (25)	1	-.04	-.07
	The U.S. is inflicted with crime.	54 (38)	57 (41)	51 (39)	-3	-.09	-.08
	Violence Index (combination of the above 3 variable)						-.04
ESTIMATION	You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S.	30 (21)	35 (25)	34 (26)	4	.02	.07
	Estimate how many more murders per ten thousand people occur in the U.S. than in Japan.	20 (14)	28 (20)	25 (19)	5	.07	.03
	The punishment for violence in the U.S. is lighter than that of Japan.	27 (19)	18 (13)	24 (18)	-3	-.08	-.04
ATTITUDE	Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone?	37 (26)	46 (33)	58 (45)	21	.24*	.16*
	Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.?	46 (32)	60 (43)	64 (48)	18	.22*	.17**
	Do you like the U.S.?	69 (49)	78 (56)	75 (58)	6	.11	.13°
	Attitude Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						.20**
COMMUNICATION	Do you want to have an American friend?	72 (51)	75 (54)	79 (61)	7	.15	.19**
	If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?	82 (58)	89 (64)	94 (72)	12	.38*	.22**
	Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?	92 (65)	96 (69)	90 (70)	-2	-.04	.12°
	Communication Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						.22**

Note

- Light viewers = a few per year or less; Medium = about a couple of times a half year or a month; Heavy = a few per week or more.
- Percentages of respondents, who answer "Agree (Yes, I do)" or "Strongly agree (Absolutely, yes)," were used for contingency tables (for murder estimate, "10 times or more" was used.)
- CD = Cultivation Differential (percent of heavy viewer minus percent of light viewer).
- Correlation coefficients were calculated by using 5 points Likert scale for perception/communication variables (except for Violence and Communication Index); 6 points scale for media watching.
- Significance for gamma and correlation: ° $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2: U.S. Movie Video Watching and Perceptions about & Communication Attitude toward Americans

	Questionnaire Items	Light % (n)	Medium % (n)	Heavy % (n)	CD	Gamma	r
VIOLENCE IMAGE	America is a dangerous nation.	55 (41)	58 (59)	59 (26)	4	.00	-.02
	Americans are violent.	27 (20)	23 (23)	30 (13)	3	.01	-.01
	The U.S. is inflicted with crime.	53 (39)	52 (53)	59 (26)	6	.01	-.05
	Violence Index (combination of the above 3 variable)						-.04
ESTIMATION	You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S.	21 (15)	31 (32)	57 (25)	36	.27**	.17*
	Estimate how many more murders per ten thousand people occur in the U.S. than in Japan.	32 (24)	20 (20)	21 (9)	-11	-.10	-.05
	The punishment for violence in the U.S. is lighter than that of Japan.	19 (14)	24 (24)	27 (12)	8	.13	.05
ATTITUDE	Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone?	39 (29)	47 (48)	61 (27)	22	.22*	.12°
	Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.?	48 (35)	64 (65)	55 (23)	7	.14	.11
	Do you like the U.S.?	66 (49)	76 (77)	84 (37)	18	.27*	.13°
	Attitude Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						.15*
COMMUNICATION	Do you want to have an American friend?	68 (50)	79 (81)	80 (35)	12	.23°	.18**
	If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?	80 (59)	93 (95)	91 (40)	11	.38*	.08
	Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?	91 (67)	95 (97)	91 (40)	0	.09	.10
	Communication Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						.15*

Note

- Light viewers = none ; Medium = about a couple of times a year or a half year; Heavy = a few per month or more. viewers are not listed.
- Percentages of respondents, who answer "Agree (Yes, I do)" or "Strongly agree (Absolutely, yes)," were used for contingency tables (for murder estimate, "10 times or more" was used.)
- CD = Cultivation Differential (percent of heavy viewer minus percent of light viewer).
- Correlation coefficients were calculated by using 5 points Likert scale for perception/communication variables (except for Violence and Communication Index); 6 points scale for media watching.
- Significance for gamma and correlation: ° $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3: Total Television Watching and Perceptions about & Communication Attitude toward Americans

	Questionnaire Items	Light % (n)	Medium % (n)	Heavy % (n)	CD	Gamma	r
VIOLENCE IMAGE	America is a dangerous nation.	63 (10)	60 (95)	58 (21)	-5	-.04	-.03
	Americans are violent.	31 (5)	25 (41)	28 (10)	-3	.15	.07
	The U.S. is inflicted with crime.	63 (10)	50 (84)	67 (24)	4	.16	.07
	Violence Index (combination of the above 3 variable)						.06
ESTIMATION	You would be acquitted if you hire an expensive lawyer in the U.S.	25 (4)	32 (53)	42 (15)	17	.09	.03
	Estimate how many more murders per ten thousand people occur in the U.S. than in Japan.	44 (7)	24 (40)	17 (6)	-27	-.19	-.14
	The punishment for violence in the U.S. is lighter than that of Japan.	6 (1)	24 (40)	25 (9)	19	.08	.09
ATTITUDE	Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone?	38 (6)	49 (82)	44 (16)	6	-.05	-.03
	Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.?	56 (9)	58 (95)	53 (19)	-3	-.08	-.09
	Do you like the U.S.?	75 (12)	75 (126)	69 (25)	-6	-.06	-.04
	Attitude Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						-.07
COMMUNICATION	Do you want to have an American friend?	63 (10)	74 (130)	72 (26)	9	.02	.00
	If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?	81 (13)	89 (150)	86 (31)	6	.04	-.03
	Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?	81 (13)	93 (156)	97 (35)	16	.51°	.00
	Communication Index (combination of the above 3 variables)						.01

Note

- Light viewers = 15 minutes or less; Medium = 1 – 4 hours; Heavy = more than 4 hours.
- Percentages of respondents, who answer "Agree (Yes, I do)" or "Strongly agree (Absolutely, yes)," were used for contingency tables (for murder estimate, "10 times or more" was used.)
- CD = Cultivation Differential (percent of heavy viewer minus percent of light viewer).
- Correlation coefficients were calculated by using 5 points Likert scale for perception/communication variables (except for Violence and Communication Index); 6 points scale for media watching.
- Significance for gamma and correlation: ° $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4: Correlations between Violent Images and Attitudes.

		VIOLENCE IMAGE			
		Danger	Violence	Crime	Violence Index
ATTITUDE	Do you want to travel to the U.S. alone?	-.22**	-.16*	-.23**	-.29***
	Do you want to experience a home stay in the U.S.?	-.13°	-.04	-.11	-.14*
	Do you like the U.S.?	-.15*	-.15*	-.21**	-.25***
	Attitude Index	-.22**	-.14*	-.24***	-.29***
COMMUNICATION	Do you want to have an American friend?	.04	-.09	-.08	-.06
	If you are introduced to an American, do you want to get along with him/her regardless of your English ability?	-.06	-.06	-.03	-.07
	Would you speak if an American, who speaks Japanese, speaks to you?	-.07	-.02	.01	-.04
	Communication Index	-.03	-.07	-.05	-.07

NOTE:

- Violence Image variables:
  Danger = "America is a dangerous nation."
  Violence = "Americans are violent."
  Crime = "The U.S. is afflicted with crime."
- Significance for correlation: ° $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results Indicating Impact of Media Exposure on Perception and Communication

		Violence Index					Communication Index					Attitude/Opinion Index				
	Step Entered	R	R^2	R^2 Change	Final β	*p*	R	R^2	R^2 Change	Final β	*p*	R	R^2	R^2 Change	Final β	*p*
Demographics & Experience	1	.085	.007	.007		.676	.316	.10	.10		.000	.251	.063	.063		.003
Gender (0=female, 1=male)					.070	.331				-.205	.003				-.062	.370
Chatting (0=no, 1=yes)					-.060	.405				.135	.048				.139	.048
Story (0=no, 1=yes)					.044	.562				.079	.268				.106	.149
Media Exposure	2	.118	.014	.007		.695	.375	.140	.040		.021	.326	.106	.043		.020
US TV Programs					-.037	.600				.178	.007				.167	.014
Rental US Movies					-.035	.631				.069	.305				.086	.213
Total Television					.066	.347				-.016	.809				-.067	.314
		Step 1: F (3, 212) = .51, p = .68 Step 2: F (6, 209) = .49, p = .81					Step 1: F (3, 214) = 7.90, p < .001 Step 2: F (6, 211) = 5.75, p < .001					Step 1: F (3, 210) = 4.72, p < .01 Step 2: F (6, 206) = 4.11, p < .01				